

UNCLE SAM'S MISSING SHIPS

New York Sun.

The recent disappearance of the naval tug Nina and her crew adds another to the list of naval vessels whose exact fate has never been ascertained. One of the earliest cases of the kind on record in the navy department was that of the ship Saratoga, eighteen guns, under command of Capt. J. Young. She sailed away in 1780 and no one knows what fate befell her and her crew.

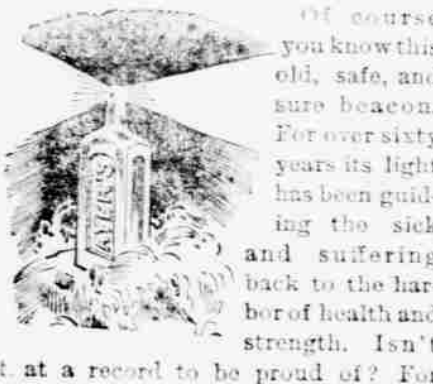
Even stranger was the story of the day of January the Saratoga and Wyoming were sent out to search for the Levant, which was then 105 days out from Hilo.

The little ship Clipper had been dismantled in severe gales which devastated the coast in the vicinity of Hilo, and it is supposed that the Levant was lost during the same hurricane. On June 8, 1861, Consul Thomas Miller reported that a mast had been washed ashore seventy-five miles north of Hilo and that it was supposed to have been the mainmast of the Levant. Even then,

it was known at the time that we had no frigates in that quarter and that the Wasp was believed to be cruising in that neighborhood, but little was thought or said about it at that time, as the report was not generally credited. We now learn from a source which can not be doubted that there was an action between a British frigate of the largest class and an American ship, and that it was undoubtedly the Wasp.

Lieutenant Conkling, who commanded the schooner Ohio, one of Commodore Sinclair's ships on Lake Erie, and who was captured in 1814 off Fort Erie and sent to England, has lately reported himself to his commanding officer to whom it appears he related having met with one of the lieutenants who were on board the above mentioned frigate, and was informed that the ship engaged was not a frigate, as was stated, but that his commander as well as every person on board could see by her battle lanterns being lighted and from the flashes of her guns that she was a corvette ship, mounting twenty-two guns, and that they believed themselves that it was no other than the Wasp, but after being so gallantly beaten off and having suffered so severely they were reluctant to acknowledge how inferior the force was which inflicted so severe a chastisement on them.

It appears by the lieutenant's own account that the action lasted several hours, that the frigate sheered off to retreat, intending, if circumstances would permit of it to renew the action at daylight, which was not far distant, but at earliest dawn there was no vestige of its gallant opponent. From the crippled state of the ships and the short intervening time between the separation and daylight the lieutenant believed it impossible that they could have been out of sight of each other if their opponent had been above water. It was during the trouble with the Barbary powers that the little ship Epervier of 477 tons, manned by 128 men, sailed out through the Strait of Gibraltar on July 14, bearing dispatches from Commodore Decatur and from Lieutenants Neal, Yarnall and Drury. The disappearance of the Epervier recalls the belief of the ancients that the rocks of Gibraltar were the pillars of the earth and that beyond this point



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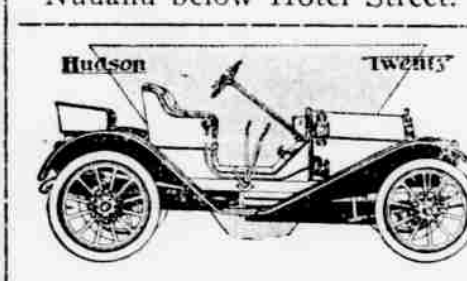
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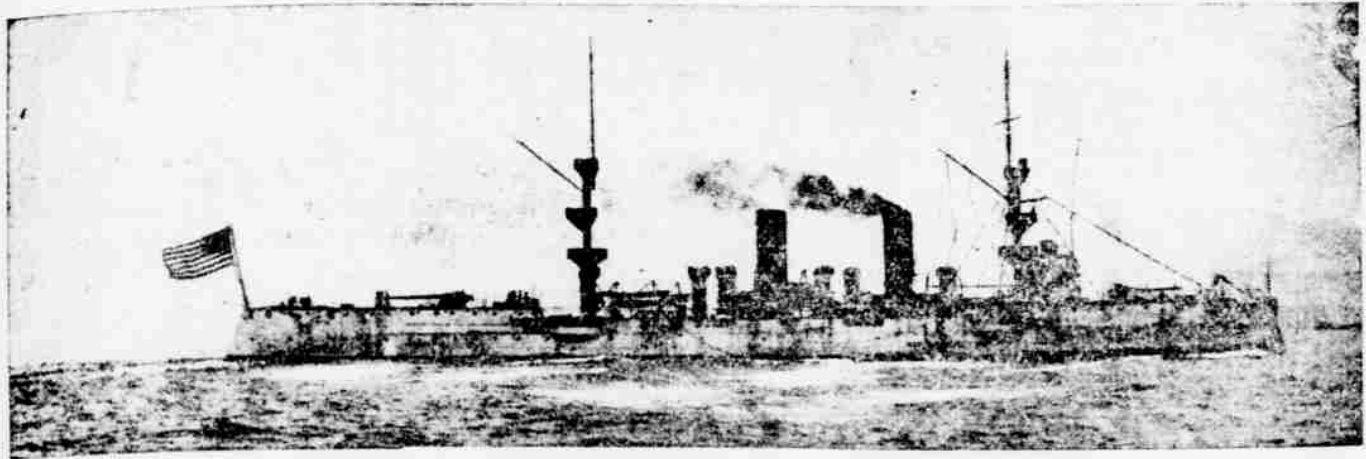
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FORCEGROWTH

WILL DO IT.



U. S. S. ALBANY, ONE OF UNCLE SAM'S LOST VESSELS.

big Pickering and the ship Insurgent, In August, 1860, both vessels sailed out to sea, one from the Delaware river and the other from Hampton Roads, and on a long cruise. The Pickering was bound for Guadalupe station, was bound for Guadalupe station, and was under the command of Lieut. B. Hillar. After she left the river she was never sighted and no vestige of wreckage from her was ever found.

The Insurgent carried 340 men and was under the command of Capt. C. Fletcher. Her sailing instructions were to cruise between 65 and 68 degrees west longitude and as far south as 30 degrees north latitude. She was never heard from again. It is supposed that both vessels, with all on board, foundered in the September gales of 1860.

Then came the story of the little brig Hornet, which did valiant service in the war of 1812. The Hornet weighed anchor for her last cruise on February 5, 1829, sailing out of New York harbor for Pensacola, where she arrived March 4, 1829, and immediately started on a cruise along the Mexican coast.

Early in November Commodore Elhott reported that the brig had probably been dismantled in a gale and the U. S. S. Peacock was sent to her relief. On December 28, 1829, the Peacock raised an anchor, with a forty-fathom chain attached, off the coast of Tampico. This was the only supposed trace of the Hornet ever found. The vessel is entered in the navy records as destroyed September 10 (P), 1829.

The Grampus, in command of Lieutenant Downes, started on a cruise early in 1843. The vessel expected to reach Norfolk in April, and Lieutenant Downes wrote to his wife in Massachusetts to meet him at the Virginia port between April 8 and 15. Mrs. Downes arrived at the appointed time and waited—waited for weeks, months, ever expectant, but with hopes growing fainter each day. The Grampus never came. She was last seen by the brig Howell on March 10, at which time she was off Cape Hatteras. The tenacity with which the families of those on board nursed their hopes can be gained from this paragraph, copied from Niles' National Register of June 3:

"The rumor of the loss of that fine little vessel, the Grampus, is, says the Albany Evening Journal of Tuesday, we rejoice to believe, without foundation. Letters received in this city by the friends of Lieutenant Ganssvoort state that the Grampus had started on a long cruise, and that no news was to be expected for some months."

It was nearly a year between the time that the United States sloop-of-war Levant disappeared forever and the final realization that ship and crew had been lost. The Levant, which was built in 1837, sailed out of Boston June 5, 1859. On October 11 she reached Valparaiso, and four days later hoisted the flag of Commodore J. B. Montgomery. In September of the following year a letter from Commander W. E. Hunt, in command, said that he would sail from Hilo for Panama in ten or twelve days. He sailed out of Hilo on September 18, and nothing has been heard from ship or crew since. On November 20 Flag Officer Montgomery reported from Panama that he had received a letter from Commanders Hunt and Lockwood, saying that the Levant and Cyane were on their way to Panama. On the last

however, hope was not entirely abandoned for all the crew, and it was not until July 24, 1861, that congress declared the Levant had been lost and fixed the date as June 30, 1861, fully nine months after the vessel probably foundered.

It is explained at the navy department that this great leeway in time is allowed as there are so many small islands in the Pacific where members of a crew might find sustenance that it is advisable to delay the legal declaration of total loss of a vessel in those waters.

Inset names seem to be a hooloo with the navy, for as a companion story to the loss of this Hornet is the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the Wasp with her eighteen guns and complement of 140 men. The Wasp, under the command of Master Commandant Johnston Blakeley, was lost with all on board in 1814. There is still uncertainty as to its fate, some maintaining that the little vessel went down in a gale, others that she was sunk during a night engagement with a British frigate, and others that she was run under in a squall.

In connection with the discussion which arose following the disappearance of the Wasp, this editorial comment, taken from the Norfolk Beacon of December, 1815, is of interest:

"Notwithstanding the reports that we have heretofore published, a conversation with an officer of the first rank and respectability in the navy permits us to entertain no doubts of the loss of the United States sloop-of-war Wasp, and that her end was as glorious as her cruise had been brilliant."

"All readers of newspapers must recollect that about a year ago there was an account of a British frigate putting into Cadiz much cut to pieces and a hundred men killed and wounded, reporting her having had an engage-

ment with a large American frigate off the port."

"It was known at the time that we had no frigates in that quarter and that the Wasp was believed to be cruising in that neighborhood, but little was thought or said about it at that time, as the report was not generally credited. We now learn from a source which can not be doubted that there was an action between a British frigate of the largest class and an American ship, and that it was undoubtedly the Wasp."

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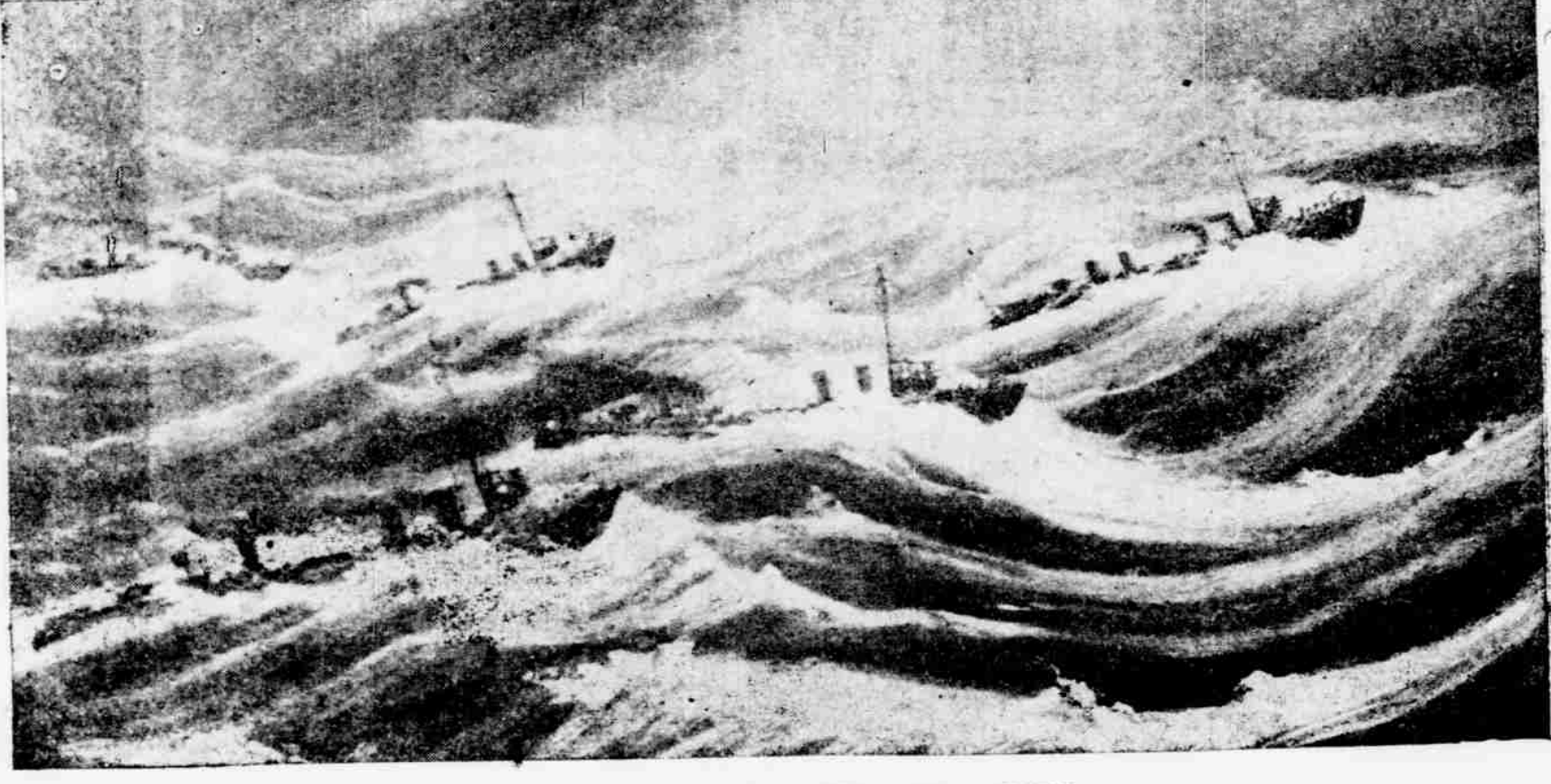
HIS MOUTH WAS UNCHANGED.

When dessert spoons were invented, Hamilton palace, the seat of Sir Charles Murray's uncle, was the first household north of the Tweed to adopt them. A small laird, invited to dine with the Duke of Hamilton, was disgusted to find a dessert spoon handed to him with the sweets. "What do you get me this for?" he exclaimed to the footman. "Do you think my mouth has got any smaller than since I lapped up my soup?"—London Chronicle.

THE ODD CORNERS.

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and how do you like the false teeth? Giles—Well, sir, they fit a bit tight under the ears.—The Sketch.



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